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Evidential system in Mabzhi Tibetan of Amdo

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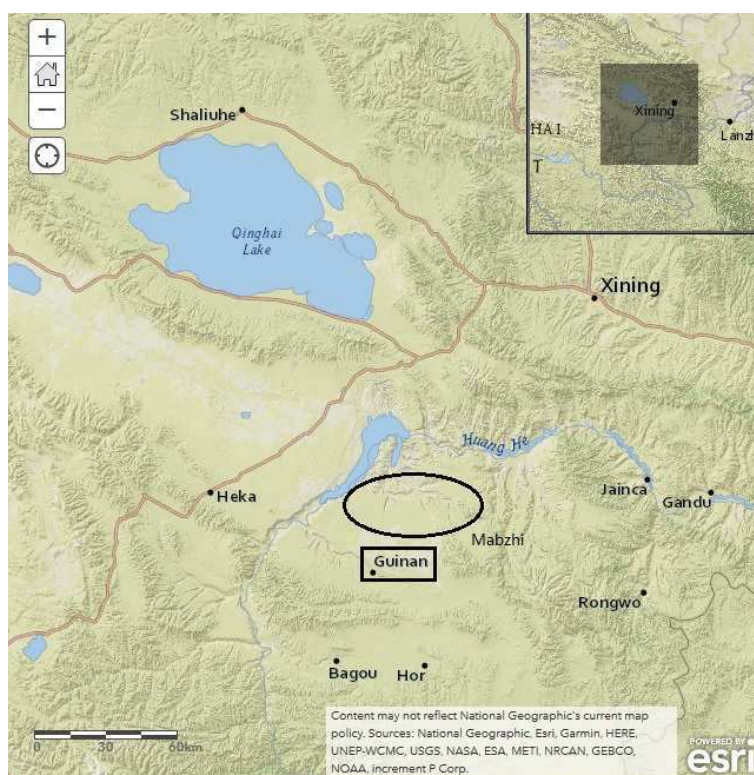
1 Introduction

Target language

- Mabzhi Tibetan: a variety of Amdo Tibetan (Tibetic)
- Classified into:
 - innovative pastoralists' dialect group (Cham-tshang Padma lHun-grub 2009)
 - Kokonor group (Tournadre & Suzuki forthcoming)

Location

Around northern half of Guinan (Mang rdzong) County, Hainan (mTsho lho) Prefecture, Qinghai Province. See Tsering Samdrup & Suzuki (2017) for details.



Source: Tsering Samdrup & Suzuki (forthcoming); designed with ArcGIS Online

Framework

There are several previous descriptions on varieties of the Kokonor group, for instance, Haller (2004) for Themchen (Bong stag) and Ebihara (2010) for rGya ye. Descriptions regarding the evidential systems in Tibetic languages vary and various terms are used (Gawne and Hill 2017). Our attitude on evidentiality is based on the description by Tournadre and LaPolla (2014): “the [grammatical] representation of source and access to information according to the speaker’s perspective and strategy”. We also refer to Oisel’s (2017) basic terminology on evidentials as much as it is valid for Mabzhi Tibetan.

We focus on the evidential system of **copulative verbs** and **existential verbs** in the conference presentation, followed by a list of suffixes for lexical verbs classified based on the TAM system. Our view is, as reflected in the main body of the article, that the evidential system of Mabzhi Tibetan can be described with a set of terms unified throughout any types of verb predicates as displayed in Oisel’s (2017) tabulars of the evidential system of Lhasa Tibetan (dBus gTsang or Central) as well as Suzuki and Sonam Wangmo’s (2018) description of Lhagang Tibetan (Khams or South-eastern). Oisel (2017) provides tabulars consisting of following five greater evidential categories: **egophoric**, **factual**, **sensorial**, **inferential**, and **mnemic**. His tabulars contain multiple forms in each evidential feature, which reflects the difference of epistemicity discussed by Vokurková (2007).

Data and structure

- Mabzhi Tibetan is the mother tongue of the first author. All the data were taken from elicitation.
- The article has a nature of demonstration, not discussion. We first present the evidential system of Mabzhi Tibetan regarding copulative and existential verbs (Section 2), and then provide sentence examples (Section 3).
- We apply a synthetic glossing rule for evidentials, not an analytic counterpart.

Crucial findings

- The tabulars displayed in Section 2 demonstrate that Oisel’s (2017) framework also works well on Mabzhi Tibetan.
- This also means that the core terms of evidentiality work well on Mabzhi Tibetan.
- In addition to this, Mabzhi Tibetan has multiple ways of expression of different degrees of epistemicity.
- Based on the present description, we can assume that the evidential system of Mabzhi Tibetan (Amdo) is closer to that of Lhasa Tibetan and more distinct from Lhagang Tibetan (Khams).

2 Principal evidential system of copulative and existential verbs

Note that all the language data are described with phonetic symbols.¹

Affirmative

verb type <i>epistemicity</i>	egophoric	factual	sensory	sensory inferential	logical inferential	mnemic
copulative <i>strong</i>	jən	re / rə re-ko-o jən-nə re	re re la	jən-k ^h o t ^h əχ re re-pa re-ko jən-k ^h a zəx re jən-nə ^l da zəx re jən-na t ^h əŋ gə	jən- ^h jə re jən-pa jən- ^l go jən-na t ^h əŋ jən-t ^h a ʏo	jən-nə ^l da zəx jən jən-k ^h a zəx jən
<i>weak</i>						
existential <i>strong</i>	jo	jo-nə re jot-t ^h a	jo-k ^h ə jo-k ^h a	jo-k ^h o t ^h əχ re jo-k ^h ə-pa jo-k ^h a zəx re jo-nə ^l da zəx re jo-na t ^h əŋ gə	jo- ^h jə re jo-pa jo-ko jo-na t ^h əŋ jot-t ^h a ʏo	jo-nə ^l da zəx jən jo-k ^h a zəx jən
<i>weak</i>						

Negative

verb type <i>epistemicity</i>	egophoric	factual	sensory	sensory inferential	logical inferential	mnemic
copulative <i>strong</i>	mən	ma-rə jən-nə ma-rə	ma-rə ma-ra	mən-k ^h o t ^h əχ re ma-rə-pa ma-rə-ʏo mən-k ^h a zəx re mən-nə ^l da zəx re mən-na t ^h əŋ gə	jən- ^h jə ma-rə-ʏo mən-pa mən- ^l go mən-na t ^h əŋ mən-t ^h a ʏo	mən-nə ^l da zəx jən mən-k ^h a zəx jən
<i>weak</i>						
existential <i>strong</i>	me	jo-nə ma-rə met-t ^h a	me-k ^h ə me-k ^h a	me-k ^h o t ^h əχ re me-k ^h ə-pa me-k ^h a zəx re me-nə ^l da zəx re me-na t ^h əŋ gə	jo- ^h jə ma-rə me-pa mo-ko me-na t ^h əŋ met-t ^h a ʏo	me-nə ^l da zəx jən me-k ^h a zəx jən
<i>weak</i>						

Minor types

hearsay: /se-kə/, /se-ka/

narrative non-sensory: /jən-zəx/ (CPV), /jo-zəx/ (EXV), /mən-zəx/ (CPV.NEG), /me-zəx/ (EXV.NEG)

¹ Mabzhi Tibetan sound system: Consonantism: /p^h, p, b, t^h, t, d, t^h, t, d, c^h, c, ʃ, k^h, k, g, q, ʔ, ts^h, ts, dz, tɕ^h, tɕ, dʒ, s^h, s, z, ʃ, ɕ^h, ɕ, ʒ, f^h, x^h, x, ʏ, ʒ, h, fi, m, m̥, n, n̥, ŋ, ŋ̥, l, l̥, r, w, j/; Vocalism: /i, e, a, o, ɔ, u, ʊ, ə/; No suprasegmental contrast.

3 Examples: Copulative and existential verbs

Concerning affirmative forms, there are two copulative verb stems, /jən/ and /re/, whereas there is only one single existential verb stem: /jo/.

3.1 Copulative verbs; affirmative

(1) Copulative; egophoric

- a $\eta a-\phi$ $\text{ḡ}ge \text{ } ^r\text{gan}$ $\text{ʔa } x^h\text{a } ma\text{-}zəx-\phi$ $jən$
 1-ABS teacher HUM-NDEF-ABS CPV.E
 I am a teacher_(HUM). [egophoric]
- b $\eta ə$ $\text{ɕə } lə-\phi$ $\text{lo}p \text{ } ma-\phi$ $jən$
 1.GEN son-ABS student-ABS CPV.E
 My son is a student. [weak egophoric]
- c $\text{ɕə } \text{t}v-\phi$ $\text{lo}p \text{ } ma-\phi$ $jən$
 son.HUM-ABS student-ABS CPV.E
 My son_(HUM) is a student. [weak egophoric demonstrated by a humilific form²]

(2) Copulative; factual

- a $k^hər \text{ } ge-\phi$ $\text{lo}p \text{ } ma-\phi$ $re / rə^3$
 3-ABS student-ABS CPV
 He is a student. [statement]
- b $\eta a-\phi$ $\text{ḡ}ma \text{ } ^wzə \text{ } yə-\phi$ $re\text{-}ko\text{-}o^4$
 1-ABS Mabzhi's-ABS CPV-PART-PART
 I am a Mabzhi's [person] (not other places')! [factual]
- c $k^hər \text{ } ge-\phi$ $\text{lo}p \text{ } ma-\phi$ $jən\text{-}nə \text{ } re$
 3-ABS student-ABS CPV
 He is a student. [factual/authoritative]

(3) Copulative; sensory

- a $^ndə-\phi$ $\text{ḡ}^ha-\phi$ re
 this-ABS meat-ABS CPV
 This is meat. (not vegetables; recognised by tasting) [sensory access]
- b $^ndə-\phi$ $\text{ḡ}^ha-\phi$ $re \text{ } la$
 this-ABS meat-ABS CPV.SEN
 This is meat! (not vegetables; recognised by tasting) [sensory access/mirative⁵]

²See Tsering Samdrup & Suzuki (forthcoming) for humilifics of Mabzhi Tibetan.

³/re/ and /rə/ are interchangeable without any conditions.

⁴Some speakers use /rə-yo-o/, but the first author does not use this.

⁵In our analysis, mirative is a pragmatic function belonging to the category of Sensory evidential.

(4) Copulative; sensory inferential

- a ⁿdə-φ ^mdzə-φ jən-k^ho t^həχ re
this-ABS male mdzo-ABS CPV-EPI
This is definitely a mdzo. (Seeing a cow-like black animal)
- b ⁿdə-φ ^mdzə mə-φ re-pa
this-ABS female mdzo-ABS CPV.SEN⁶-INFR
This is probably a mdzo mo.
- c ⁿdə-φ ^ɸlən ɲə-φ re-ko
this-ABS bull-ABS CPV.SEN-INFR
This is quite probably a bull.
- d ⁿdə-φ ^fja rə-φ jən-k^ha zəχ re
this-ABS two-year-old yak-ABS CPV-EPI
This is perhaps a two-year-old yak.
- e ⁿdə-φ wi lə-φ jən-nə ⁿda zəχ re
this-ABS yak calf-ABS CPV-EPI
This is likely a yak calf.
- f ⁿdə-φ wəp rəχ-φ jən-na t^həŋ gə
this-ABS cow calf-ABS CPV-EPI
This is maybe a cow calf.

(5) Copulative; logical inferential

- a ⁿdə-φ ne-φ jən-^fjə re
this-ABS highland barley-ABS CPV-EPI
This is definitely highland barley.
(The known condition is “a barley-like plant growing over 3,500 m above the sea level”)
- b ⁿdə-φ cə-φ jən-pa
this-ABS wheat-ABS CPV.E⁷-INFR
This is probably wheat.
- c ⁿdə-φ jəχ kə-φ jən-^ŋgo
this-ABS oat-ABS CPV.E-INFR
This is perhaps oat.
- d ⁿdə-φ lo ɛər-φ jən-na t^həŋ
this-ABS rape seed-ABS CPV-EPI
This is likely rape seed.
- e ⁿdə-φ ʂan ma-φ jən-t^ha ɣo
this-ABS bean-ABS CPV-INFR
This is maybe bean.

⁶In (4bc), the copulative verb /re/ is analysed as Sensory because of three points: (1) this category is Sensory inferential; (2) /jən/ appears in (4def) instead of /re/; and (3) this case can be parallel with (5bc).

⁷In (5bc), the copulative verb /jən/ is analysed as Egophoric because of two points: (1) this category is Logical inferential and is thus related to personal knowledge, and (2) this case can be parallel with (4bc).

(6) Copulative; mnemic

tə-φ ŋə-φ jən-nə⁸ ʔda zəx jən
it-ABS 1.GEN-ABS CPV-MNE⁸
I remember that it is mine.

3.2 Existential verbs; affirmative

(7) Existential; egophoric

ŋa-a ɕa ji-φ jo
1-DAT child-ABS EXV.E⁹
I am pregnant.
(If a speaker is a male, it means: I have children.)

(8) Existential; factual

- a tə-na ʔo tɕa-φ jo-nə re
that-LOC milk tea-ABS EXV-STA
There is milk tea there.
- b tə-na tɕ^hə ʔgul-φ jo-t^ha
that-LOC hot water-ABS EXV-PFT
There has been hot water there.

(9) Existential; sensory

- a tə-na fɰ^ha-zəx-φ jo-k^hə
that-LOC deer-NDEF¹⁰-ABS EXV-SEN
There is deer. (The speaker saw, heard, etc.)
- b tə-na c^hə-φ jo-k^ha
that-LOC dog-ABS EXV-SEN
There are dogs! (The speaker saw, heard, etc.) [experienced/mirative]

⁸There is another form of Mnemic /jən-k^ha zəx jən/; however, the meaning is almost the same. Therefore, we only present a single example. See also (12, 18, 24).

⁹In our analysis, the stem /jo/ is not necessarily related to Egophoric because the existential verb is only this stem. When it is used alone, it has Egophoric evidential.

¹⁰In Mabzhi Tibetan, ‘meat’ and ‘deer’ are homophony: /fɰ^ha/. The latter can take a nondefinite marker /-zəx/ to indicate ‘being single’. In Example (9a), the speaker noticed just one individual of deer somewhere.

(10) Existential; sensory inferential

- a tə-na ləx-*ϕ* jo-k^ho t^həχ re
that-LOC sheep-ABS EXV-EPI
There is definitely sheep.
- b tə-na lə ɣə-zəx-*ϕ* jo-k^hə-pa
that-LOC newly born lamb-NDEF-ABS EXV-SEN-INFR
There is probably a newly born lamb.
- c tə-na ma mə-zəx-*ϕ* jo-k^ha zəx re
that-LOC ewe-NDEF-ABS EXV-EPI
There is perhaps an ewe.
- d tə-na f^hap zən-zəx-*ϕ* jo-nə ^uda zəx re
that-LOC castrated male sheep-NDEF-ABS EXV-EPI
There is likely castrated male sheep.
- e tə-na t^hom-zəx-*ϕ* jo-na t^həŋ ^ugə
that-LOC non-castrated male sheep-ABS EXV-EPI
There is maybe non-castrated male sheep.

(11) Existential; logical inferential

- a tə-na m^hnə-*ϕ* jo-^hiə re
that-LOC person-ABS EXV-EPI
There should be people.
- b tə-na lo lən-*ϕ* jo-pa
that-LOC elderly-ABS EXV.E¹¹-INFR
There are probably elderlies.
- c tə-na ta wa-*ϕ* jo-ko
that-LOC monk-ABS EXV.E-INFR
There are perhaps monks.
- d tə-na ^skən ma-*ϕ* jo-na t^həŋ
that-LOC thief-ABS EXV-EPI
There are likely thieves.
- e tə-na m^hnə tɕ^ha met-*ϕ* jot-t^ha ɣo
that-LOC stranger-ABS EXV-EPI
There are maybe strangers.

(12) Existential; mnemonic

- ŋa-a χwe tɕ^ha-tə-*ϕ* jo-nə ^uda zəx jən
1-DAT book-DEF-ABS EXV-MNE
I remember that I have that book.

¹¹In (11bc), the existential verb /jo/ is analysed as Egophoric because this category is Logical inferential and is thus related to personal knowledge. Cf. (4bc, 5bc).

3.3 Copulative verbs; negative

(13) Copulative; egophoric

- a $\eta a-\phi$ $^h\text{ge } ^r\text{gan}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}n$
 1-ABS teacher-ABS NEG.CPV.E
 I am not a teacher. [egophoric]
- b $\eta\acute{a}$ $\text{ʕ}\acute{a} \text{ l}\acute{a}-\phi$ $\text{lo}p \text{ ma}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}n$
 1.GEN son-ABS student-ABS NEG.CPV.E
 My son is not a student. [weak egophoric]

(14) Copulative; factual

- a $k^h\acute{a}r \text{ ge}-\phi$ $\text{lo}p \text{ ma}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}-r\acute{a}$
 3-ABS student-ABS NEG-CPV
 He is not a student. [statement]
- b $\eta a-\phi$ $^h\text{l}\acute{y} \text{ z}\acute{a}\eta \text{ } ^n\text{g}\acute{a}-\phi$ $j\acute{a}n-n\acute{a} \text{ ma}-r\acute{a}$
 1-ABS Lutshang's-ABS CPV.NEG
 I am not a Lutshang's [person]! [factual]

(15) Copulative; sensory

- a $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $f^h\text{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}-r\acute{a}$
 this-ABS meat-ABS NEG-CPV
 This is not meat. (recognised by tasting) [sensory access]
- b $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $f^h\text{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}-r\acute{a}$
 this-ABS meat-ABS NEG-CPV.SEN
 This is not meat! (vegetables; recognised by tasting) [sensory access/mirative]

(16) Copulative; sensory inferential

- a $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $t\text{ʕ}^h\acute{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}n-k^h\acute{o} \text{ t}^h\acute{a}\chi \text{ re}$
 this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV-EPI
 This is definitely not water. (Seeing coloured liquid)
- b $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $t\text{ʕ}^h\acute{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}-r\acute{a}-p\acute{a}$
 this-ABS water-ABS NEG-CPV.SEN-INFR
 This is probably not water.
- c $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $t\text{ʕ}^h\acute{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}-r\acute{a}-\gamma\acute{o}$
 this-ABS water-ABS NEG-CPV.SEN-INFR
 This is quite probably not water.
- d $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $t\text{ʕ}^h\acute{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}n-k^h\acute{a} \text{ z}\acute{a}\chi \text{ re}$
 this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV-EPI
 This is perhaps not water.
- e $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $t\text{ʕ}^h\acute{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}n-n\acute{a} \text{ } ^n\text{d}\acute{a} \text{ z}\acute{a}\chi \text{ re}$
 this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV-EPI
 This does not look like water.
- f $^n\text{d}\acute{a}-\phi$ $t\text{ʕ}^h\acute{a}-\phi$ $m\acute{a}n-na \text{ t}^h\acute{a}\eta \text{ g}\acute{a}$
 this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV-EPI
 This is maybe not water.

(17) Copulative; logical inferential

- a ⁿdə-φ tɕ^hə-φ jən-^{fi}ə ma-rə-γo
this-ABS water-ABS CPV-NEG.EPI

This is definitely not water.

(The known condition is “the liquid, which smells very strongly”)

- b ⁿdə-φ tɕ^hə-φ mən-pa
this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV.E-INFR

This is probably not water.

- c ⁿdə-φ tɕ^hə-φ mən-^ŋgo
this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV.E-INFR

This is perhaps not water.

- d ⁿdə-φ tɕ^hə-φ mən-na t^həŋ
this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV-EPI

This is likely not water.

- e ⁿdə-φ tɕ^hə-φ mən-t^ha γo
this-ABS water-ABS NEG.CPV-INFR

This is maybe not water.

(18) Copulative; mnemonic

- tə-φ ser-nə ŋa-φ mən-nə ⁿda zəx jən
it-ABS say-NML 1-ABS NEG.CPV-MNE

I remember that it is not me who said it.

3.4 Existential verbs; negative

(19) Existential; egophoric

- ŋa-a ɕa ji-φ me
1-DAT child-ABS NEG.EXV.E

I have no children.

(20) Existential; factual

- a tə-na tɕa-φ jo-nə ma-rə
that-LOC tea-ABS EXV-STA.NEG

There is no tea there.

- b tə-na tɕa-φ met-t^ha
that-LOC tea-ABS EXV.NEG-PFT

There has been no tea there.

(21) Existential; sensory

- a tə-na ʎde-φ me-kʰə
that-LOC ghost-ABS NEG.EXV-SEN
There is no ghost. (The speaker did not feel anything on a ghost's existence.)
- b tə-na ʎde-φ me-kʰa
that-LOC ghost-ABS NEG.EXV-SEN
There is no ghost. [experienced]
(Though they say there is a ghost, the speaker did not feel its existence.)

(22) Existential; sensory inferential

- a tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-kʰo tʰəχ re
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV-EPI
There is definitely no water.
- b tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-kʰə-pa
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV-SEN-INFR
There is probably no water.
- c tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-kʰa zəx re
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV-EPI
There is perhaps no water.
- d tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-nə ʎda zəx re
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV-EPI
There is likely no water.
- e tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-na tʰəŋ gə
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV-EPI
There is maybe no water.

(23) Existential; logical inferential

- a tə-na tɕʰə-φ jo-ʰə ma-rə
that-LOC water-ABS EXV-NEG.EPI
There is definitely no water.
- b tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-pa
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV.E-INFR
There is probably no water.
- c tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-ko
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV.E-INFR
There is quite probably no water.
- d tə-na tɕʰə-φ me-na tʰəŋ
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV-EPI
There is likely no water.
- e tə-na tɕʰə-φ met-tʰa ʎo
that-LOC water-ABS NEG.EXV-EPI
There is maybe no water.

(24) Existential; mnemic

ŋa-a ^hkam ba-tə-ϕ me-nə ^hda zəx jən
 1-DAT wrench-DEF-ABS EXV-MNE
 I remember that I do not have the wrench.

4 Concluding remarks

- Six categories of evidentiality are described in a systematic way; of them, the core evidentials are egophoric, factual, and sensory form a morphological viewpoint.
- Except for egophoric and sensory evidentials, there are several forms depending on the degree of epistemicity.
- Factual evidential functions as ‘factual’ and ‘authoritative’ other than neutral statement.
- Sensory evidential can distinguish simple sensory access from sensory experienced.
- Inferential evidentials have multiple degrees of epistemicity, and suffixes are basically common to the copulative and existential verbs.
- Inferential evidential forms generally contain an egophoric form; however, this feature does not imply an egophoric sense.
- Among various suffixes of Inferential evidentials, the stem followed by /-pa/ and /-ko, -ŋgo/ is either Sensory (for Sensory inferential) or Egophoric (for Logical inferential).

Abbreviations

1 first person	EPI epistemic	NEG negative
3 third person	EXV existential verb	NML nominaliser
ABS absolutive	HUM humilific	PART particle
CPV copulative verb	INFR inference	PFT perfect
DAT dative	LOC locative	SEN sensory
DEF definite	MNE mnemic	STA statement
E egophoric	NDEF nondefinite	

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Appendix: List of suffixes for lexical verbs (affirmative)

The evidential system of suffixes for lexical verbs follows the same framework as copulative and existential verbs (For Mnemic, see the bottom of the tabular).

TA	egophoric	factual	sensory	sensory inferential	logical inferential
nonperfect habitual	V-kə jo	V-kə jo nə re	V-kə jo k ^h ə	V-kə-EXV.SI	V-kə-EXV.LI
future	V- ^h jə jən	V- ^h jə re?	—	V- ^h jə-CPV.SI	V- ^h jə-CPV.LI
stative (statement)	V-nə re	V-nə re	V-kə	V-SI	V-LI
stative (endopathic)	V-kə	V-təŋ t ^h a	V-ko k ^h ə	V-SI	V-LI
progressive	V-kə ra jo	V-kə ra jo nə re	V-kə ra jo kə	V-kə ra-EXV.SI	V-kə ra-EXV.LI
perfect	Vp-Va-a	Vp-Va-zəx	Vp-Va-t ^h a	Vp-ts ^h ar-s ^h oŋ-SI	Vp-ts ^h ar-s ^h oŋ-LI

Progressive mnemonic: V-kə ra jo nə ^hda zəx jən

Perfect mnemonic: V-jo nə ^hda zəx jən

N.B.

V Nonperfect stem of a lexical verb

Vp Perfect stem of a lexical verb

Va directional verb auxiliaries: təŋ / s^hoŋ

SI All sensory inferential markings (Section 2) applied/ with a slight change

LI All logical inferential markings (Section 2) applied/ with a slight change

CPV.SI All sensory inferential forms of copulative verbs (Section 2) applied

CPV.LI All logical inferential forms of copulative verbs (Section 2) applied

EXV.SI All sensory inferential forms of existential verbs (Section 2) applied

EXV.LI All logical inferential forms of existential verbs (Section 2) applied

Allophones Sound changes of suffixes occur

/kə/ [kə], [ɣə], [^hgə], [k^hə]

/a/ [a], [ɲa]